

cold. That's why I joined with Congressman JIM LANGEVIN to introduce the Fair, Accurate, Secure and Timely Voting Act of 2012, the FAST Act. A Senate companion bill was introduced by Senators CHRIS COONS of Delaware, MARK WARNER of Virginia and SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island.

Representative LANGEVIN and I have significant experience serving at the State and local levels, and we strongly believe that the Federal Government often works best when it leverages those laboratories of democracy at the local and State levels to test innovative solutions and governing reforms and best practices that might have applicability at the Federal level.

Consistent with this principle, our bill avoids overly prescriptive requirements and, instead, offers States a menu of options and financial incentives to adopt voting reforms.

Our FAST Voting Act recognizes that modernizing the Nation's voting system will require collaborative and coordinated efforts at the State, Federal, and local levels. It creates a competitive grant program, similar to the President's Race to the Top schools initiative, and rewards those States that aggressively implement the most effective and promising reforms to expand the franchise.

The menu of reforms includes flexible voter registration opportunities, including same-day registration; early voting, with a minimum of at least 9 days before the election; no-excuse absentee voting; assistance to voters who do not speak English as a primary language; assistance to voters with disabilities, including the visually impaired; effective access to voting for members of the Armed Services; formal training of election officials, including State and county administrators and volunteers; auditing and reducing waiting times at polling stations; creating contingency plans for voting in the event of a natural or other kind of disaster.

To be clear, the FAST Act is the latest in a series of proposals to reform how our elections are administered. Given the renewed interest among the public, Members of Congress, and the President, we ought to at least move forward with hearings to debate the merits of these proposals.

This is the world's greatest and oldest democracy. How can any of us be satisfied with the scandalous operations that occurred in all too many voting places that impaired the ability of Americans, free Americans, to freely cast their vote?

We ought to clean this up. It's a solvable problem, and it ought to be solved on a bipartisan basis.

#### HONORING SERGEANT FIRST CLASS RILEY G. STEPHENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FLORES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, America recently lost another hero in the war

on terror. On September 28, America lost Army Sergeant First Class Riley G. Stephens of Tolar, Texas.

Riley grew up in Tolar. He enlisted as an infantryman in the Army in 1993. He volunteered for the Special Forces Assessment and Selection Course. He also went on to graduate from the Special Forces Qualification Course in March of 2005.

At the time of his tragic death, he was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) as a Special Forces medical sergeant. He would go on five separate deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

During his 19 years of service to our country, Sergeant Stephens earned many awards and decorations. He earned the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, two Bronze Star Medals, the Purple Heart, the Army Achievement Medal with Valor, four Army Commendation Medals, four Army Achievement Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with three campaign stars, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon Military, the Army Service Ribbon, two Overseas Service Ribbons, the NATO Medal, the Air Assault Badge, the Basic Parachutist Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Ranger Tab and the Special Forces Tab.

On October 7, Sergeant First Class Riley G. Stephens was laid to rest at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery, not far from his hometown in Tolar where, earlier that day, his life was celebrated and his service to our country was celebrated in a church full of friends and family and fellow patriots.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Sergeant Stephens. He will forever be remembered as an outstanding soldier, a husband and a father. We thank him and his family for their service and sacrifice for our country.

His sacrifice reflects the words of Jesus in John 15:13 which say: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

As I close, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all Americans to continue praying for our country during these difficult times, for our military men and women, and for our first responders who keep us safe by their sacrifice each day.

God bless our military men and women, and God bless America.

#### COMMEMORATING THE CANONIZATION OF SAINT MARIANNE OF MOLOKAI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) for 5 minutes.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution commemorating the remarkable life of

service of Mother Marianne Cope of Molokai, and her canonization as a saint of the Roman Catholic Church on October 21, 2012. She joins Saint Damien of Molokai among the 12 American saints.

I am joined in introducing this resolution by Congresswoman ANN MARIE BUERKLE, who represents Syracuse, New York, where Mother Marianne's Order of the Sisters of Saint Francis is based; by Congressman RICHARD HANNA, who represents Utica, New York, where Mother Marianne grew up; and by Congresswoman COLLEEN HANABUSA, who represents Hawaii's First Congressional District. I am proud to represent Hawaii's Second Congressional District, which includes the island of Molokai.

It may seem surprising that one-sixth of America's saints are connected to the tiny Kalaupapa Peninsula on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. The story of Kalaupapa is heartbreaking.

We have all heard of how isolated native populations are especially susceptible to new diseases. Once Westerners and other peoples came to Hawaii, diseases like smallpox and measles caused high mortality. It was no different with leprosy. Native Hawaiians made up the majority of those afflicted with this disease.

To stem the spread of leprosy, the Kingdom of Hawaii decided in 1866 to forcibly relocate persons found to have the disease to the Kalaupapa Peninsula. Those with the disease were outcasts in every sense of the word. Kalaupapa was chosen because it is surrounded by the ocean and some of the tallest sea cliffs in the world, effectively cutting off escape.

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Mothers, fathers, and children who contracted the disease were taken from their families and brought to Kalaupapa, where living conditions were terrible and medical care almost nonexistent. Father Damien, who ultimately contracted and died from the disease, is recognized throughout the world for all he did to improve conditions for the outcasts of Kalaupapa. Mother Marianne carried on and expanded on his work. This resolution honors Mother Marianne for her legacy of compassionate care and recognizes her example of what it truly means to dedicate one's life in service to others. One does not need to be Catholic to be humbled and inspired by the life of someone who devoted herself so selflessly to those whom almost everyone else shunned and rejected.

Mother Marianne, born Barbara Koob, immigrated to this country from Germany as a young girl. She and her family settled in Utica, New York. At the age of 24, she entered the religious life as a Catholic nun and commenced a life dedicated to children, education, and the sick. Mother Marianne later focused her efforts on health care and was influential in establishing St. Elizabeth Hospital in Utica. She was also